

1999, Cadet Captain Ralph Ware of Aurora, Colorado, graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.

The United States Military Academy is among the most prestigious military academies in all the world. The Academy selects only the best and brightest young people of our nation to serve and study at West Point for four years. Once admitted, the cadet must endure the most rigorous training, testing his mind, body and spirit on a daily basis. As the cadet meets each challenge, he is transformed into a new, multifaceted person, capable of serving his country in the face of any obstacle. This transformation culminates in graduation, where each cadet celebrates the achievements of the past and the possibilities of the future.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to congratulate Cadet Captain Ralph Ware and all of the West Point graduates. With confidence, I look forward to their leadership in America.

MANDATORY GUN SHOW BACKGROUND CHECK ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 17, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2122) to require background checks at gun shows, and for other purposes:

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Chairman, I support the McCarthy amendment because I believe that gun shows should come under the same laws as gun stores. When individuals buy a gun from a gun store, they must undergo a background check—we must have the same background check for gun shows.

This amendment will require under the Brady Law, the instant background check of up to 3 business days on all gun show transactions. This is fair. We should have no exceptions to the rule.

Imagine no background checks. According to the National Association of Arms Shows, over 5 million people attend nearly 5,200 gun shows each year in the U.S. No background checks or record keeping was done at these events.

According to Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder, if the 72-consecutive-hour rule had been in effect over the past 6 months for regular retail store purchases—more than 9,000 felons and other prohibited purchasers would have been able to buy guns because their background checks would not have been completed in time.

Now, if this could happen at gun stores—imagine if we do not have this 3 day period when purchasing a gun at a gun show? Why should we make it easier for potential criminals to purchase a gun? An increasing number of criminals—who couldn't pass a background check at a gun store—are finding gun shows to be an easy source of guns. Imagine all the people that have died—because someone bought a gun without a background check.

And let me remind you that under Mr. DINGELL's amendment proposing a 24-hour background check—17,000 prohibited persons would have slipped through the system.

We do not want any more crimes to occur. We do not want any more children in jail. We do not want to go to any more funerals.

Let's regulate gun show sales the same way as gun store sales. Support the McCarthy amendment like the: National Alliance of Stocking Gun Dealers, American Bar Association, The Police Foundation, National Association of Black Law Enforcement Officers, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

RECOGNIZING CROSSROADS COMMUNITY HOSPITAL AND HILLSBORO AREA HOSPITAL

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take one moment to recognize Crossroads Community Hospital in Mount Vernon and Hillsboro Area Hospital in Hillsboro for being mentioned in HCIA's "100 Top Hospitals: Benchmark for Success—1998."

It is comforting for me and the citizens of the 20th district of Illinois to know that we are receiving some of the best health care treatment provided in the Nation today. Health Care in America today is a vital issue. The successes of these Hospitals show that Illinois has given the issue the attention it deserves.

I am proud of the quality of medical care that these hospitals have provided to my district. The excellent service provided by Crossroads Community and Hillsboro Area Hospitals are symbols of the excellence in aiding and saving the beloved residents of the 20th district.

RECOGNIZING PROJECT '99 AT SHORE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Project '99 at Shore Regional High School, which serves West Long Branch, Sea Bright, Oceanport, and Monmouth Beach, New Jersey. Project '99 is an innovative 4-day pre-graduation program that combines public service events with seminars on self-improvement.

The schedule contains activities that will be held throughout the community from June 21–24, 1999. To be eligible to participate in Project '99, students must maintain exemplary discipline and academic records, and also be involved in the planning and development of two different events.

The first three days of the project focus specifically on community service. Participants engage in dune grass planting, school beautification, and mural painting projects. In addition, students host a senior citizen breakfast, organize and run a field day at the Monmouth School for Children, and work with Habitat for Humanity.

On the final day of the program, students turn their attention towards preparation for life after high school. Events include classes in self-defense, personal finance and car maintenance, and a special health and fitness ses-

sion. Project '99 concludes with a motivational speaker and a barbecue send-off.

At a time when most seniors are involved only with celebrations and awards ceremonies, it is admirable that these students are choosing to take time and rededicate themselves to helping others. The personal qualities of compassion, awareness, and a commitment to public service emphasized by the Project '99 program are essential for the next stage of the students' lives.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in honoring the creativity of the students, teachers, administrators, and parents at Shore Regional High School who are finding ways to make even the last days of high school a valuable educational experience.

HONORING THE OUTSTANDING GRADUATES OF JOHN J. PER- SHING INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL 220

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I ask you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating special graduates of the 12th Congressional District of New York. I am certain that this day marks the culmination of much effort and hard work which has lead and will lead them to continued success. In these times of uncertainty, limited resources, and random violence in our communities and schools, it is encouraging to know that they have overcome these obstacles and succeeded.

These students have learned that education is priceless. They understand that education is the tool to new opportunities and greater endeavors. Their success is not only a tribute to their strength but also to the support they have received from their parents and loved ones.

In closing, I encourage all my colleagues to support the education of the youth of America. With a solid education, today's youth will be tomorrow's leaders. And as we approach the new millennium, it is our responsibility to pave the road for this great Nation's future. Members of the U.S. House of Representatives I ask you to join me in congratulating the following students from IS 220: Salutatorian, Weva Kalidahanova; Valedictorian, Carol Chan.

FAMILIES FIRST ACT

HON. TOM BLILEY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Speaker, in time for Father's Day, I have introduced the Families First Act with Representatives JAMES OBERSTAR, DAVE CAMP, BOBBY SCOTT, DAN BURTON, EARL POMEROY, and JIM DEMINT. This bill that would make adoptions more affordable and provide children with loving homes. Sadly, many families wanting to open their homes and provide love to children are unable to do so because of the extremely high costs of adoption, which